

7-064 2002
YARL'S WOOD
Campaign

24 April 2002

Campaign To Stop Arbitrary Detentions At Yarl's Wood

We are a community-based voluntary group, campaigning against arbitrary detention of asylum seekers. We are not funded by the government - we are completely independent of any political or religious group.

We would like to give you some important information which may help you.

Notice To Those Detained At Yarl's Wood On Feb. 14th

Please pass this information on to any other ex-Yarl's Wood detainees you know - whether still in detention or not.

All Yarl's Wood detainees have been moved to other places of detention - mostly to detention centres, but they are also moving some detainees to prisons - 70 so far. Some ex-Yarl's Wood detainees have already been questioned by the Police about what happened at Yarl's Wood. These police enquiries could lead to criminal charges and have already led to 10 people being charged with violent disorder.

Police, detention centre officers or prison staff may ask **you** about what happened at Yarl's Wood.

If they are not arresting you and are asking you questions as a volunteer:

you **do not** have to answer their questions. They have no power to interview you unless you agree. We think it is very important that anyone who was at Yarl's Wood just before or on 14th February should speak to a criminal law solicitor first **before** they speak to the police. This must be a solicitor who knows about criminal law and there are some contact numbers for them below. The information you know may seem straightforward but it may cause problems for you or other detainees later, so it is very important that you talk to a solicitor first, even if you are only a witness. It is important that you do not give information to detention centre or prison staff as they may also use this information in a court case.

If you are being arrested:

you do have to go with the police, but you still have the right to speak to a solicitor of your choice at the police station, and we have recommended below two criminal firms you could contact. Keep these numbers safe in case you need them. It is very important that you do ask for the help of a solicitor as they can tell you whether you should or should not speak to the police. The police may try to persuade you to have a solicitor they choose (a "duty solicitor"), but this will not be the best defence for you, and it is very important that you have a good solicitor from the start who specialises in criminal cases. You should be calm and polite, but tell the police they should contact your solicitor in order for you to get legal advice, this is your right. Your solicitor may be able to come to the police station or send someone in their place to be there when the police question you.

What you can do now

You can contact a solicitor right now, and the solicitor will advise you what to do in case the police question you. It is essential that you speak to a solicitor who specialises in criminal cases. The solicitor dealing with your immigration case might not have the right experience for a criminal investigation, or might not have a contract to practice criminal law. You will be entitled to free advice and we show a list below of some solicitors who have been recommended to us - they may come, or send someone to visit you if you contact them.

Solicitor's firm : Taylor Nichol
Solicitor : James Nichol
Address : 3 Station Place, London, N4 2DH
Telephone : 0207 272 8336
Email : taylor.nichol@easynet.co.uk

Solicitor's firm : Birnberg Peirce
Solicitor : Nigel Leskin
Address : 14 Inverness Street, London NW1 7HJ
Telephone : 020 7253 7744
Fax : 020 79110170
Email : nleskin@birnbergpeirce.co.uk

These solicitors are willing to give you advice and may visit you. It will not cost you money.

Civil compensation

Civil law solicitors may be able to help you get compensation for the things you lost in the fire, or help you bring a case against your detention, or the conditions in which you were detained, or the conditions you are being detained in now. You may or may not have a good case, but they will be able to tell you if you speak to them. These two solicitors have been recommended to us ...

Solicitor's firm : Bhatt Murphy
Solicitor : Mark Scott / Hamish Arnott
Address : 23 Pitfield Street, London N1 6HB
Telephone : 020 7253 7744
Fax : 020 7253 7766
Email : m.scott@bhattmurphy.demon.co.uk

Solicitor's firm : Birnberg Peirce
Solicitor : Daniel Guedalla
Address : 14 Inverness Street, London NW1 7HJ
Telephone : 0207 9110166
Fax : 0207 9110170
Email : Daniel@birnbergpeirce.co.uk

They may also come and visit you if you contact them. It will not cost you money.

Immigration matters

Good legal advice is very important from the start. Attached is a list of good solicitors. If you want to switch solicitors, do not tell your current solicitors. Look at the "good solicitors" list and find out if one of them can take your case. When you are sure you have a new solicitor, then you can inform your current one.